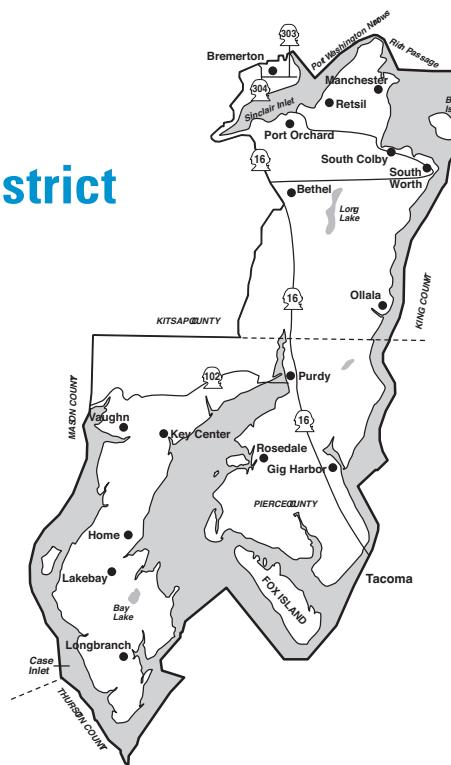


2010 Session Review

26th District



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Representative
Larry Seaquist
26th District 2010

Session Review

Dear neighbors,

Thanks again for the honor of representing you.

The legislature just finished its 2010 work -- rebalancing the state's budget. We have finally, I hope, hit the bottom of this severe recession. But on the way down revenues continued to sink while costs — like increased numbers of kids in public school and kids' health care — went up.

We cut \$ billions out of virtually every program in the state. Even K-12 education was whittled back by 5%; we cut most other big programs much deeper in order to protect education and to save as much of our basic health and human services safety net as possible.

In the end, I voted against the budget and the new taxes needed to pay for it. I believe we should have cut even deeper. In my view we need to downsize our whole state government to fit the new realities. But just cutting is not enough. If we are going to pull ourselves out of this deep economic hole, we must invest in education both in K-12 and in our community colleges. We need to make sure every adult now out of work can get into a community college class for the skills needs to get back to work.

So looking ahead, my priorities are on **education**, reform and **government accountability**. I'm working to reset our programs so we get better results at lower cost. We must get good value for every penny of taxes.

We're not out of the woods of this recession yet. What are your priorities? I'd like very much to know how you think we can best get ourselves back on the path to prosperity.

Very best wishes,

Larry

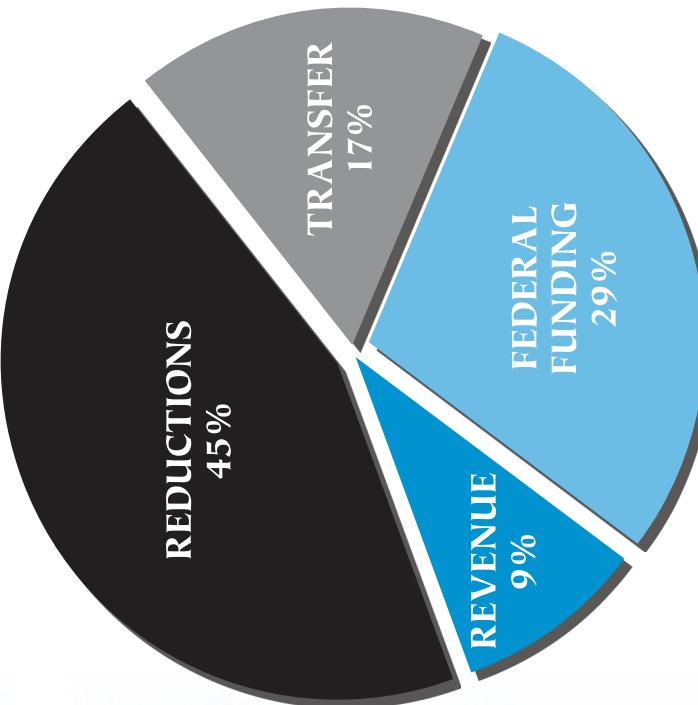


State Budget Update

Last year the state faced a \$9 billion budget shortfall and the Legislature approved a budget with no new revenue or taxes. I voted for that budget. This year we were hit with another \$2.8 billion shortfall – meaning this budget cycle had \$9 billion in less revenue and over the last two years, a \$12 billion shortfall was dealt with.

The budget that ended up passing relied on \$757 million in taxes – **and I voted no on both the budget and revenue bills.** I support a great deal of the budget, and I worked with my colleagues to trim back, but in the end I just didn't believe the revenue and taxes were needed. I believed, and continue to believe, that we need to rethink state government to fit within existing means.

Our state provides important services, including education from early learning to college, health care for children, and support services for the elderly and disabled, among many other services. My goal is to find common-sense solutions to delivering on these, even in tough economic times. LEGAL TENDER AND PRIVATE



How the two-year budget makes up for the \$9 billion shortfall

Making Government More Efficient

From my first day in Olympia I've been focused on finding ways to use taxpayer dollars as best as possible. It's often frustrating work, but the results make it worthwhile. For example, we've been fighting together for years to make sure the Narrows Bridge tolls are used well, so that fares aren't being raised to pay for waste.



Freezing \$1.9M in bonuses to state workers – Last session I passed legislation to review why our Washington Management Service group had grown from a few hundred to over four thousand. In the report, we discovered that bonuses were being paid to many of these employees, even while we were cutting government. I introduced and passed House Bill 2998, which based on 2009 numbers, prevented \$1.9 million in bonuses.

Next step in reforming the ferry system – Like with the bridge tolls, many of you have been working with me to cut ferry system costs so that it becomes a viable operation. Thanks in part to this work, Washington State Ferries didn't have to cut service, but there are still problems. We passed House Bill 3209 to make negotiations with workers better and puts WSF on notice to address waste and fix problems.



Larry asking questions in the committee he vice chairs, Health and Human Services Appropriations.

A Great Education for All Kids

Access to a great school and education is a right every child deserves and should have. We do have great schools, but we all know there is more we can be doing. We want every child willing to work hard to have every opportunity available to them.



Improving school funding – Last session we passed historic school-funding reform, updating laws and formulas that have been basically untouched in decades. The next step was House Bill 2776, passed this year, which will continue to update laws so that schools are receiving the money they need to provide great educations.

Focusing on student learning – Race to the Top is an initiative from the Obama Administration to focus schools on data-driven ways to improve student learning. States passing reforms can apply for a share of \$4 billion in grant dollars – money our schools need. I supported Senate Bill 6696, now law, which will evaluate our teachers better, help low-performing schools, and make us competitive for as much as \$250 million in school funding.

Jobs and the Economy

The biggest challenge of this recession is going to be unemployment. Right now in Washington, it's close to 10 percent – in the construction industry it's closer to 30 percent. I believe our economy will pick up soon, and many of the people ready to get back to work will be able to do that.



Jobs Act – The Legislature passed House Bill 2561, putting a bond measure on the ballot. If approved by voters, around 30,000 green jobs would be created through energy-efficiency projects at schools and public buildings. The energy savings around the state are estimated at \$130 million a year.